

Message Text

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EUR ALSO FOR AMBASSADOR MCCLOSKEY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, PGOV, GR, US
SUBJ: FOREIGN RELATIONS: IMPACT OF CONGRESSIONAL EMBARGO ACTION
ON THE POSITION OF KARAMANLIS

1. AS OUR REPORTING HAS INDICATED, THERE IS VIRTUALLY UNIVERSAL CONDEMNATION BY GREEKS OF THE SENATE AND HOUSE VOTES TO LIFT THE EMBARGO. FOR MOST, IF NOT ALL, GREEKS, THE EMBARGO ACTION WAS SEEN PRIMARILY AS AN ISSUE OF JUSTICE AND MORALITY. FOR THE MAJORITY WHICH HAS IDENTIFIED GREECE'S INTERESTS WITH THE US, IT ALSO INVOLVED QUESTIONS OF FRIENDSHIP AND LOYALTY. THE MOST COMMON FEELINGS WE HEAR EXPRESSED ARE OF DISAPPOINTMENT, BITTERNESS AND BETRAYAL.

2. FURTHERMORE, DESPITE OUR PROTESTATIONS TO THE CONTRARY, MOST GREEKS THINK THE LIFTING OF THE EMBARGO MEANS THAT FOR STRATEGIC REASONS THE US HAS CHOSEN TURKEY OVER GREECE. THE ARMS MOST GREEKS FEAR WILL NOW FLOW TO TURKEY HAVE LED TO CONCERN OVER THE GREEK- TURKISH MILITARY BALANCE AND OVER THE THREAT GREEKS PERCEIVE OF POSSIBLE TURKISH AGGRESSIVENESS IN THE AEGEAN.

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3. THE GREEK REACTION IS ALSO ONE OF DISAPPOINTMENT IN PRESIDENT CARTER WHO, IN THEIR EYES, HAS GONE BACK ON HIS CAMPAIGN PROMISES. MOREOVER, THEY CANNOT UNDERSTAND WHAT TO THEM APPEARS TO BE A LACK OF INTEREST IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION ON CYPRUS WHEN THE PRESIDENT IS ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN PROTECTING HUMAN RIGHTS ELSEWHERE.

4. ALL THIS CANNOT HELP BUT HAVE SOME IMPACT ON THE POSITION OF PRIME MINISTER KARAMANLIS IN THIS COUNTRY IN VIEW OF HIS OPEN AND UNEQUIVOCAL PRO-AMERICAN, PRO-WESTERN STANCE (AS MOST GREEKS SEE IT). SEVERAL MINISTERS AND OTHER SENIOR GOG OFFICIALS HAVE TOLD US IN RECENT DAYS THAT THE LIFTING OF THE EMBARGO UNDERMINES KARAMANLIS' POSITION. ALTHOUGH THERE UNDOUBTEDLY IS AN ELEMENT OF TACTICAL MAN-EUVERING IN THIS, WE BASICALLY AGREE. THIS DOES NOT MEAN, WE HASTEN TO ADD, THAT KARAMANLIS' STRONG POSITION OF LEADERSHIP IS THREATENED OR THAT HE WILL BE FORCED TO CHANGE THE POLICY ORIENTATION HE HAS CHARTED FOR GREECE. IN-EVITABLY, HOWEVER, THE REACTION AMONG GREEKS OF ALL SOCIAL STRATA TO THE LIFTING OF THE EMBARGO WILL STRENGTHEN PAPANDREOU'S POSITION AND MAKE HIM MORE CREDIBLE IN HIS ATTACKS AGAINST KARAMANLIS' PRO-WESTERN POLICIES. CONVERSELY, KARAMANLIS' CREDIBILITY AND PRESTIGE HAVE BEEN TARNISHED AND AN ELECTION TODAY WOULD PROBABLY SHOW SOME DROP IN THE POPULAR VOTE FOR HIM.

5. WE BELIEVE THAT A CABINET MEMBER PUT IT QUITE ACCURATELY WHEN HE TOLD US YESTERDAY THE REAL DILEMMA THE LIFTING OF THE EMBARGO POSES FOR KARAMANLIS IS HOW, IN THE LIGHT OF THIS ACTION, TO EXPLAIN AND JUSTIFY HIS PRO-WEST POLICY IN THE MONTHS AHEAD. HOW, FOR EXAMPLE, DOES HE ANNOUNCE GREECE'S RETURN TO FULLER PARTICIPATION

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IN NATO A FEW MONTHS HENCE, WHEN NEGOTIATIONS HOPEFULLY WILL BE CONCLUDED IN BRUSSELS.

6. THUS, AS WE SEE IT, THE PROBLEM THE LIFTING OF THE EMBARGO POSES FOR KARAMANLIS IS NOT PRIMARILY ONE OF TODAY (HE CAN UNDOUBTEDLY WEATHER THE SHORT-TERM STORM), BUT OF THE FUTURE. AND THE OUTCOME WILL DEPEND HEAVILY ON EVENTS AND DEVELOPMENTS LARGELY OUTSIDE HIS OWN CONTROL, I.E. WHETHER PROGRESS IS MADE TOWARD A CYPRUS SETTLEMENT SOON AND HOW GREEK-TURKISH BILATERAL RELATIONS EVOLVE. THE GREEKS, AND KARAMANLIS HIMSELF, HAVE RECEIVED WITH REAL RESERVATIONS OUR WORDS OF EXPECTATION THAT FOLLOWING THE LIFTING OF THE EMBARGO TURKEY WILL BE MORE FORTHCOMING IN MOVING TOWARD AN EQUITABLE CYPRUS SETTLEMENT. THEY BELIEVE THAT PRESSURE WILL HAVE TO BE APPLIED ON THE TURKS TO MAKE THEM LESS INTRANSIGENT. IN THE ABSENCE OF THE EMBARGO THEY WILL BE WATCHING TO SEE HOW WE BRING OUR INFLUENCE TO BEAR ON ANKARA TO ACHIEVE AN AGREEMENT ON CYPRUS. THIS, IN FACT, APPEARS TO BE THE LINE THE GREEKS ARE ALREADY TAKING, HERE AND IN NICOSIA.

7. IN SUM, HOW BADLY KARAMANLIS WAS HURT DOMESTICALLY

BY THE LIFTING OF THE EMBARGO WILL, IN OUR VIEW, DEPEND
ON HOW QUICKLY PROGRESS CAN BE MADE ON THE CYPRUS PROBLEM
AND TURKISH BEHAVIOR ON AEGEAN ISSUES.
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